Project Start Up

Initial Release	**1.0**
Date:	**January 1997**

Why a Project Check List?

A good way to ensure that all start-up tasks are completed prior to actually starting the project is to develop a start-up check list. The check list can be developed and then used by others to ensure that the tasks necessary to baseline the project are completed. A sample start-up check list is provided at the end of this sub-section. This process is not a requirement for state organizations, but is a suggested administrative tool and serves as a sample.

A project list becomes a way for a project manager to organize and communicate tasks that should be completed prior to starting the project. For large projects, some of the start-up tasks could take as long as some of the initial planning steps.

Beyond serving as a communication document, use of the project list can also trigger completion of tasks that the project team might overlook. The start-up phase is usually characterized as one of impatience. In most cases, it takes a very long time to get the project through the concept phase and actually approved and initiated.

What is a Project Check List?

The check list is a combination of an action list and a tool to verify that necessary steps have been completed. The start-up check list should be organized according to the major areas of concern that will determine the project's success. This list includes:

- Planning
- Organization
- Tracking and monitoring processes
- Defining what will be tracked and monitored and the format for this information
- Reviewing the schedules and formats
- Reviewing the configuration management system and ensuring the assignment of this responsibility
- Reviewing the change control process and ensuring that it is institutionalized
- Determining how issues will be raised in the project and who will track their resolution
- Defining the risk management process
- Defining the change management process

The development and use of a start-up check list also provides the project team with the tools to ensure that all information has been reviewed and approved. This check list can also help prioritize the sequence of items to be completed:

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Start-Up Check List

- Defining the project environment
- Completing the project baseline
- Identifying project standards and tools
- Identifying and refining the roles and responsibilities of the project team members
- Setting expectations for the project team
- Defining all the project control processes
- Obtaining and allocating resources
- Initiating project kick-off meeting

Who Should Complete It?

The project manager owns the start-up check list, although in most projects, the full team provides input. In large projects, the development and completion of the start-up check list might be assigned as an administrative support function.

Format of a Check List

The format of the check list can be whatever the project team defines, but it usually resembles more of an outline than a dissertation. It could be single line items with space provided for the person to complete the check list with the current status of an item. Sample answers might be:

- Y = Item has been addressed and is completed.
- N = Item has not been addressed, and needs to complete the check list process.
- N/A = Item has not been addressed and is not related to this project.
- P = Item has been addressed and some issue resolution is needed to complete the item or annotate it as "N/A".

If the item status information is modified, then the person responsible for the check list should ensure that the information is given to the full project team for use.

Each item on the check list should also have an area for comments and should note plans to resolve "N" or "P" entries.

The project team can choose to put this list under configuration management so that it can be shared during the early project day session and the project manager can retain the date version.

The format can also be modified to the requirements of a particular project.

Sample

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Start-Up Check List

A sample of a check list is provided below and is also in Appendix B: *Templates & Sample Forms*.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">Form: PM 06
Sample Project Start Up Check List</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td align="center">Item</td><td align="center">Status</td><td align="center">Comments/
Plan to Resolve</td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1</td><td>Planning</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.1</td><td>Is the project statement -- scope, definition and objectives -- the same as agreed to in the project initiation process and/or in the vendor contract?</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.2</td><td>Has the project statement been reviewed as part of the baseline process?</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.3</td><td>Is there a baseline plan against which to measure progress?</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4</td><td>Does the baseline plan address the following areas:</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.1</td><td>Project Scope, Deliverables, and Milestones</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.2</td><td>Work Breakdown Structure</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.3</td><td>Task plans, estimates, resource assignments</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.4</td><td>Task dependencies</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.5</td><td>Project Schedule</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.6</td><td>Milestone Schedule</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.7</td><td>Project progress tracking</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.8</td><td>Issue Resolution and Change Management</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.9</td><td>Quality Plan</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.10</td><td>Risk Management Plan</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.11</td><td>Project Organization</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Other Plans as needed:</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.12</td><td>Facilities Plan</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.13</td><td>Documentation Plan</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.14</td><td>Materials Plan</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.15</td><td>Training Plan</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.16</td><td>Back-up and Recovery Plan</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.17</td><td>Contingency Plan</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.18</td><td>Cut Over Plan</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.19</td><td>Warranty Plan</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.20</td><td>Transition Plan</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">1.4.21</td><td>Others:</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

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	Item		**Status**	**Comments/ Plan to Resolve**
1.5	Is the plan for project resources adequate?			
1.6	Are the original project schedule and budget realistic?			
1.7	Is the plan for the organization of the project resources adequate?			
1.8	Are there adequate project control systems?			
1.9	Is there an information system for the project?			
1.10	Were key project stakeholders brought into project plan?			
1.11	Were potential users involved early in the planning process?			
1.12	Was planning completed before the project was initiated?			
1.13	Is the plan under configuration management?			
1.14	If there are vendors, have they signed off on the project plan?			
1.15	If there is an independent oversight contractor, have they signed off on the project plan?			
2	**Organization**			
2.1	Is the project organization documented and on file?			
2.2	Is the Project Manager qualified and experienced in Project Management?			
2.3	Have roles and responsibilities of the team been documented and clearly communicated to the team, customer, and stakeholders?			
2.4	Is the organization structure appropriate for the project's size and complexity?			
2.5	Is there an identified role of a technical leader (i.e., Project Lead, Team Lead, Solution Architect)?			
2.6	Is the quality function identified and assigned?			
2.7	Is there a Project Administrator function identified and defined?			
2.8	Is there a Change Management Board?			
2.9	Have the configuration management functions been assigned?			
2.10	Are there backup strategies for key members of the project?			
2.11	Other Organization items:			
3	**Tracking & Monitoring**			
3.1	Are the various types of reports, their contents, frequency, and audience defined and communicated to the project team?			

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	Item	**Status**	**Comments/ Plan to Resolve**
3.2	Are the input requirements from the team members clearly documented and communicated?		
3.3	Have the reports to be produced, distributed, and filed been defined?		
3.4	Has the format for tracking and monitoring schedules and costs been defined?		
4	**Reviewing**		
4.1	Have the various meetings, the purpose, context, frequency, and participants been defined and communicated?		
4.2	What are the defined meeting materials?		
4.3	Are the meetings set up to have assigned note takers that will add actions/issues to the issue list?		
5	**Issue Management**		
5.1	Is an Issue Management Process documented and filed?		
5.2	Is this process communicated to the customer and team members?		
5.3	Will an issue form be in use?		
5.4	Will all project issues be unconditionally tracked through the issue resolution process?		
5.5	Will all tasks resulting from issues be entered into the project plan and tracked through the plan?		
5.6	Are there processes for unresolved issues to be escalated and resolved within a reasonable timeframe?		
6	Configuration Management (Change Control)		
6.1	Will there be a Change Control Process in place?		
6.2	Is the Change Control Process documented and on file?		
6.3	Will this process be communicated to the customer and project team?		
6.4	Will there be a change request form in use?		
6.5	Will all project deliverable and software configuration management be changed only through the change control process?		
6.6	Will all change requests be unconditionally tracked through this process?		
6.7	Will all change requests and current status be logged?		

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	Item	**Status**	**Comments/ Plan to Resolve**
6.8	Will all tasks resulting from approved changes be entered into the project plan and tracked through the plan?		
6.9	Will new change requests be acknowledged in a timely manner?		
7	**Risk Management**		
7.1	Will the project risks being managed be according to the project's risk management process?		
7.2	Will the Risk Worksheet be updated on a regular and frequent basis?		
7.3	Will the Risk Status be reported to management on a regular and frequent basis?		
7.4	Will the risk documents be filed?		
7.5	Will there be documented contingency plans for the top 5-10 risks?		
7.6	Will the Preventive Plans for the top 5 risks be identified, included in the project plan, and implemented?		
8	**Quality Assurance**		
8.1	Is there a Quality Assurance Plan documented and filed?		
8.2	Are the quality assurance functions and related roles and responsibilities clearly defined?		
8.3	Are there completion/verification criteria defined for each task producing an output?		
8.4	Is there a process (test plans, inspections, reviews) defined for verifying outputs for each task?		
8.5	Will tasks be marked "complete" only after QA has been successfully completed?		
8.6	Will there be a formal process for submitting, logging, tracking, and reporting items undergoing QA throughout the submit-test-rework-resubmit-retest cycle?		
8.7	Will statistics related to QA be collected, trends analyzed, and problems raised as issues?		
8.8	Will the QA related information be reported regularly as part of the Status Reporting mechanisms?		
8.9	Has a method and process for requirement tracking been developed?		